



**Ahfad University for Women**



**The Regional Institute of Gender, Diversity,  
Peace and Rights**

**Project Title: The Introduction of the Quota System in Sudan and its Impact in  
Enhancing Women's Political Engagement**

## **Women in Political Parties' Structures: The Quota Types Discourse**

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## Part One: The Political Parties' Quota Discourse

### **0.0 Introduction**

Political parties<sup>1</sup> are groups of persons, who seek to control government through the winning of elections and the holding of public offices. Political parties are essential for democratic governance. They are the major mechanisms for the development of broad policy and leadership choices; as well as the medium through which, these options are presented to the people. Major functions of political parties include the nomination of candidates for public offices. That is, political parties select candidates and then present them to the voters; and work to help their candidates win elections. Political parties inform the people, and inspire and activate their interests and participation in public affairs.<sup>2</sup>

Within the women quotas discourse, political parties are seen as the political incubators which prepare women for the challenging work as parliamentarians and other decision-makers in society. This then means that, political parties ought to begin opening up spaces for women within various intra-party structures. That is, the quota system must be implemented in the political parties themselves, if there is to be a contagion effect vis-à-vis the general institutional structure in society. Various political women have to start becoming familiar with public work from within their political parties. Otherwise, the claim for implementation of the quota system outside the political parties' framework becomes rather contradictory.<sup>3</sup>

Women generally encounter many obstacles within political parties. Notwithstanding the underpinning party political ideology, women, invariably encounter resistance from various levels of interests within their respective political party. There are also issues of preferential treatment within respective political parties. Women from poorer socio-economic background do not always get equal chances; as those, accorded to their more affluent, and better socially connected fellow women, within same political parties. That is, if those poorer women got accepted into the political parties' structures in the first place. Women therefore, face a conundrum of obstacles along the quota system route, within and without political parties' structures.<sup>4</sup> On the other hand, political parties are a way people with similar ideas can join with others to express their opinions. Political parties are formed because not all people think alike; conflict and differences of opinions are natural to humanity. Suppressing disagreements, or prohibiting peaceful forms of conflict, can often lead to a loss of liberty. If dissenting views are denied the right to be heard, violence can be the alternative. In

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<sup>1</sup> See Neuman, S. (ed) (1956) *Modern Political Parties*. IL: University of Chicago Press.

<sup>2</sup> Ware, A. (1996) *Political Parties and Party Systems*. Oxford University Press.

<sup>3</sup> See Matland, R. E. and Montgomery, K. A. (eds) (2003) *Women's Access to Political Power in Post-Communist Europe*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

<sup>4</sup> Inglehart, R. and Norris, P. (2003) *Rising Tide, Gender Equality and Cultural Change Around the World*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

governance through political parties; no one side will always win and some people will disagree with the majority. However, if everyone has had a say, and the rights of the minority are respected, then most people are willing to accept the decisions made, using peaceful means to express any differences that may remain.<sup>5</sup>

Many political parties, especially clientelists political parties, which use patronage as modus operandis within party structures, do not provide women with the same support given their male colleagues. Women members are considered as political burdens. The political parties' gatekeepers do not appreciate the presence of many women in the party. However, political parties which are premised on programs and therefore interests based approach, these kinds of political parties do not feel threatened or frustrated by women presence. They see women as representing vital interests groups within the remit of the women voting force in the general electorate, and other issues of general societal development.<sup>6</sup>

Political parties<sup>7</sup> can be seen to serve two major purposes: interest articulation, and interest aggregation. Interest articulation means that political parties define and express a group's needs and wants in a way that the public and political system can understand. Interest aggregation means the process by which political parties bring together various viewpoints on issues. Thus, political parties develop enough common ideas among enough people so that pressure can be brought to bear upon the political system.<sup>8</sup> The type of electoral system is a major factor in determining the type of party political system. In countries with a simple plurality voting system, political parties elected tend to be few (often only two in any given jurisdiction). In countries that have a proportional representation voting system, as exists throughout Europe, or to a greater extent ranked voting systems, such as in Australia or Ireland, three or more parties are often elected to parliament in significant proportions, and thus may have more access to public office.

In single-party<sup>9</sup> systems, one political party is legally allowed to hold effective power. Although minor parties may sometimes be allowed, they are legally required to accept the leadership of the dominant party.<sup>10</sup> This party may not always be identical to the government, although sometimes positions within the party may 'in fact be more important than positions within the government. In the Sudanese experience, the Sudanese Socialist Union, of the late President Nimeri, used women quotas as a paradigm for political token women. There were women quotas in the National Assembly, but, these women were there to sing the party and government hymn and praises. They did not address women issues for which the notion and practice of genuine quotas system was introduced in the first place universally. These women were in fact representing themselves as individuals. The fact that they were biologically

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<sup>5</sup> McDonnel, D. and Newell, J. (2011) "Outsider Parties", Special Edition of *Party Politics*, Vol. 17, No. 4.

<sup>6</sup> Inglehart, R. and Norris, P (2003). Op.Cid.

<sup>7</sup> Duverger, M. (1954) *Political Parties*. London: Methuen

<sup>8</sup> Smith, S. (2007) *Party Influence in Congress*. Cambridge University Press.

<sup>9</sup> North Korea and China is an example; others can be found in Fascist states, such as Nazi Germany between 1934 and 1945, and the Sudan (1969-1986) Under the Sudanese Socialist Union of the late President Nimeri. The single-party system is thus usually equated with dictatorships and tyranny.

<sup>10</sup> Gunthere, R. and Larry, D. (2003) "Species of Political Parties: Anew Typology," *Party Politics*, Vol. 9, No. 2, pp. 167-199.

female is irrelevant to the general concerns of women issues throughout the reign of the late Nimeri and his Sudanese Socialist Union.

In dominant-party<sup>11</sup> systems, opposition parties are allowed, and there may be even a deeply established democratic tradition, but other parties are widely considered to have no real chance of gaining power. Sometimes, political, social and economic circumstances, and public opinion are the reason for others parties' failure: Sometimes, typically in countries with less of an established democratic tradition, it is possible the dominant party will remain in power by using patronage and sometimes by voting fraud. In the latter case, the definition between dominant and single-party system becomes rather blurred.<sup>12</sup> The National congress Party is a dominant political party in the Sudanese experience, and the women therein cannot really be considered as being representatives of general Sudanese women in terms of the cardinal issues of women freedoms, rights, development, participation, health, education, and general wellbeing and welfare respectively.

### ***1. The Quotas Conceptual and Theoretical Discourse within Political Parties***

In general, women's involvement in various party political paradigms has exponentially risen from mere 1% in the 1960s, to 14% in 2003. However, this positive upward movement ought to be appreciated within the general remit of societal structural variables, which inform various relationships between men and women in society. This change must be interrogated without negative cynicism, given the long path travelled by various women groups, along the rough socio-cultural and political quagmires and roads, made more impassable by universal deficit of suffrage and disenfranchisement. Therefore, extant quotas systems, are, but, socio-political gains, which must be appreciated, given the socio-cultural realities on societal grounds. The good news is that, there is no reverting back to yester years of absolute and degrading patriarchal subjugations.<sup>13</sup>

The literature on quotas, especially in the African continent, appears to indicate that, there is some kind of positive correlation between various political upheavals, and armed conflicts, and their resolutions and the apparent rise in embracement of quotas in the continent. The cases of South Sudan, Mozambique, South Africa, Rwanda, Namibia, Eritrea, Uganda, and Sudan are rather interesting to analyse. There appears to be a sudden fast track in the introduction and implementation of quotas in these countries. It is of course a blessing. However, why suddenly this political coziness with this concept and its practice which has been resisted for very long time? Is it to do with the shock and trauma of armed and other conflicts? Is it to do with guilty

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<sup>11</sup> Examples of dominant party systems include the People's Action Party in Singapore, the African National Congress in South Africa, the Human Rights Protection Party in Samoa, the Indian National Congress in India from 1947-1996, the National Congress Party of Sudan under President Bashir 1989 to date; and the Democratic Party of Socialists of Montenegro in Montenegro. One party dominant system also existed in Mexico with the Institutional Revolutionary

<sup>12</sup> Ware, A. (1987) *Citizens, Parties and the State: A Reappraisal*. Princeton University Press.

<sup>13</sup> See Tripp, A.M. (2000) *Women and Politics in Uganda*. Kampala: Oxford: James Fountain Publishers

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political conscience vis-à-vis the various political actors who privately and silently know their role in the said sociopolitical upheavals in these countries? Is it a kind of political apology? Is it a sudden realisation that, the more than 50% of the human persons, who have been excluded for a very long time, that, this vital section of society can act as a comprehensive political stabilizer?<sup>14</sup>

It is politically and socially commendable that, party political structures, and their operatives and managers, are now willing to open up hitherto closed spaces for women, to come in and partake in the party political decision-making processes. Quotas have proven to be more efficient vehicles for the participation of women in party political discourse, and other acts which influence general societal norms, and general relationships, which do lead to tangible results for various sectors of society and the economy therein. However, the substantive and procedural nature of this opening up ought to be investigated. Are women going into these political parties as invitees, and therefore, their presence therein, shall be that of mere spectators without the authority of possessors and owners? Can they go into these political parties and become part of the movers and shakers of such political parties? Or are they just there because they were told to go into these political parties in accordance with societal cultural stereotype? Are they going into these political parties to be politically tolerated only; because that is good for political window dressings? All these are questions and issues which ought to be interrogated.<sup>15</sup>

Should this sudden change of political attitude, and which led to fast tracking into party political involvement by various political women; be viewed with political suspicion? The issues of types of quotas notwithstanding, whether they are optional by political parties, or legislated and therefore reserved seats for women, or whether women are included in mixed lists or separate closed list as in the Sudan,<sup>16</sup> it is important to understand these developments within the remit of party political instrumentalisation versus the presence of women therein as integral selves. The issues of qualitative political output and mere numbers are problematic.<sup>17</sup>

Political cynics and others could correctly argue that, some ruling political parties, and therefore, parties of governments in Africa for example, are quick to fast track women's participation via reserved quotas, as well as youth for the simple reason that, these categories of political cohorts, are more manageable, and politically docile. Therefore, they could be brought into parliaments via non-partisan reserved lists, where they are not obliged to follow any political party directives, but, they can still feel politically obliged and grateful to the ruling party that allowed them to come into parliament via the reserved lists, especially if, the legislation that brought them into parliament was passed by the ruling party in parliament, due

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid

<sup>15</sup> See Tamal, S. (1999) *When Hens Begin to Crow*. Kampala: Fountain Publishers.

<sup>16</sup> According to the National election Act 2008, Chapt. 4, para. 33, 25% of the total number of seats in the national Assembly is reserved for women. These seats in the National Assembly will be filled through separate and closed women's list. Voters have the right to vote for only one women's list of their choice. Only parties with women's list clear the 4% threshold will be qualified for accessing seats reserved for women. Seats will be allocated according to proportional representation among these parties. Furthermore, "the seats designated to women's list shall be won by the candidates of these list in the order in which their names appear in the list concerned from top to bottom"

<sup>17</sup> See Dahlerup, D and Freidenvall, L. (2003) Quotas as a fast to equal political representation for women. Paper presented at the IPSA World Congress, June 29 to July 4, Durban, South Africa.

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to the fact that, such parties always monopolize and control such parliaments in Africa, and elsewhere in the Third World. This process of cooption could produce these categories of political reserved voting force in parliaments. This does happen in many African countries. These kinds of political scenarios are always considered as the abuse of the political sanctity of the quotas system.<sup>18</sup>

On the other hand, while it is important to consolidate the gains made from the wind of change in terms of the quotas system, for the participation of women, and notwithstanding the intentions of governments and other political parties, questions must also be asked about the persistence of mainstream patriarchal ideology, with all its attendant socio-cultural paraphernalia. Can the universal availability of the quotas systems alone reengineer and reconstruct the entrenched attitude of patriarchs in charge of political parties? Can men in dominant and other minor political parties in fact treat women as political equals? If women are not treated as political equals with the political dignity they deserve as parliamentarians and party members, what are the ramifications of such attitudes on their political performances and continuity as socially and personally productive politicians in such parties? On the other hand, what does that mean in terms of the inherent underlying principles and comprehensive expectations embedded within the philosophy of quotas systems? Can women politicians with undermined self-esteems benefit from the quotas system under such political working environments? What are the ramifications of such attitudes on the wider celebrating political communities?<sup>19</sup>

If it is in fact established that, there is a persistent undermining of women parliamentarians either in parliaments or in political parties, then, it can be strongly argued that, the doctrines and principles of representative democracy, are, but, dead. The cardinal reason why women as a group, and other men in society, who support women, and fight for the entrenchment of the quotas system are adamant, for the healthy survival, and sustainability of the quotas system, is because they are democrats.<sup>20</sup> They are democrats because, they believe that, democracy is the least evil of all types of governance, and because, they have known that, unless those who cannot speak for themselves are represented by selfless others, then, there will continue to be chaos in society, and people shall resort to self-help strategies in which, many in society shall not be able to survive.<sup>21</sup>

It is also true that, it is not possible to institute direct democracy, where, everyone in society shall represent himself and or herself. Therefore, representative democracy entails that, those that go to parliaments, at least, ideally, shall mirror those whom they purport to represent in terms of all socio-cultural and political paradigms.<sup>22</sup> Therefore, political women, in party

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<sup>18</sup> See Kanakuzwe, J. (2003) Quotas in Practice: The Challenge of Implementation and Enforcement in Rwanda. Also see Powley, E. (2004) Strengthening Governance: The Role of Women in Rwanda's Transition. Report from the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women (OSAGI), United Nations.

<sup>19</sup> For the same wondering mind, see, Schwartz, H. (2005) p.13

<sup>20</sup> See Narud, H.M. and Valen, H. (2000) "Does Social Background Matter?" in Esaiasson, P. and Heidar, K. Beyond Westminster and Congress: The Nordic Experience. Columbus: Ohio State University Press.

<sup>21</sup> See Rai, S.M. (1994) "Gender and Democratization", in Democratization, Vol. 1, Summer 1994, PP.209-228, London.

<sup>22</sup> See Wängnerud, L. (2000) "Testing the Politics of Presence: Women's Representation in the Swedish Riksdag", in Scandinavian Political Studies, Vol. 23-No. 1, 2000.



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political structures are presumed by their sisters outside of such structures, to be in there as their eyes and ears. These are the essences and kernels of the quotas system in political society. On the other hand, besides these issues of representation and democracy, do the conducts and the general political moralities, of party political women, in various party political structures, matter to those whom they purport to represent?<sup>23</sup>

Well, it appears, the answer to such a question is discoverable, within the general, and specific political goals crucibles, of why, those party political women, went into politics in the first place. It also depends, as to whether, they went into parliament, as party political recruits, or, they went as activists, via women reserved lists, which are not tied to political parties. These issues also boil down, as to whether, women see politics as a means of earning a living, as many men do, or, do they see politics, as means to communitarian comprehensive ends, and ends which benefit other women folks? These are pertinent questions which political party women ought to answer within the general quotas system parlance.<sup>24</sup>

Could quotas be construed as partial remedial conduits, through which, the deconstruction of structural inequities and inequalities in society is effected? Or as others say, could they be treated and considered as structural artifacts of social representation versus politics of ideas?<sup>25</sup> Or should we carry on arguing that they are politics of realism versus politics of idealism? All these question are posed because, critical analyses of the discourse of quotas draws one into reflective temperament, in which the intensity of reflexivity sobers one up, to the extent that, the question as to what in fact do we want to achieve after all the positive arguments in favour of quotas are exhausted seems compulsive. It could be argued that, issues of representations, presences, prescription, substantiveness, and such like, drives the discourse on quotas into the realm of syllogism. If these issues are put into two categories, it could be argued that, the two categories become the Scylla and Charybdis of the quotas discourse; in which, the polarisation of the discourse produces two intellectual dangers; and the avoidance of one, increases the risk from the other.

The other intellectual and structural issues in the quotas discourse, which are akin to the Ordeal of Sisyphus in Greek mythology, are the issues of equal results or outcomes and opportunities.<sup>26</sup> However, are we not here, concerned, with the politics of societal inequalities throughout the discourse on quotas? This equality of results, are we debating the quantity of results and their qualities or both? The opportunities here, are they not the same opportunities which the concerned political communities want to establish; in order to deconstruct various iniquitous structural variables, to allow women agencies to positively flourish? If these are the same issues, then, what seems to be the problem? Why problematise<sup>27</sup> the discourse on quotas, and then create vacuous and redundant differentiations as regards results, outcomes and opportunities? The whole issue boils down to societal positive reform, where, the hitherto

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<sup>23</sup> See Nelson, B.J. and Chowdhury, N. (1994) *Women and Politics Worldwide*. Yale University Press, New Haven and London.

<sup>24</sup> Pitkin, A.M. (1967) *The Concept of Presentation*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press

<sup>25</sup> See Phillips, A (1995) *The Politics of Presence*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. PP.25-44.

<sup>26</sup> See Dahlerup and Freidenvall (2003:4). *Op.cit*, and Phillips (1995:60). *Op.cit*.

<sup>27</sup> See Dahlerup, D. (1988) "From a Small to a Large Minority: Women in Scandinavian Politics", in *Scandinavian Political Studies*, 4: 275-98.



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subaltern others, take part in the shaping of; and orienting society towards general positive directions, through its various institutions including parliaments as sources of laws, where laws are the epitome of societal norms, traditions and comprehensive positive moralities.<sup>28</sup>

The 1995 Beijing Platform for Action urged Governments and other actors to take measures supporting women's participation in all levels of power and decision-making, including parliaments<sup>29</sup>. Since then, the representation of women slowly and steadily increased in national parliaments. In 1995, women on average accounted for 10% of members of the lower or single houses of national parliaments. By April 2009, this figure had increased to 17%. However, even if all regions improved gender balance in national parliaments, average female representation remained below 15% in Northern Africa 10%, Eastern and Western Asia 14% and 9%, respectively, and Oceania only 3%.<sup>30</sup>

The report implies that gender quotas helped increase the worldwide average representation of women in parliament. Eighteen out of the 23 countries, with at least 30% representation of women have implemented some type of gender quota for national parliaments, either by law or voluntary decisions of political parties. Furthermore, on average in 2009, women comprised 21% of parliamentarians in countries that used gender quotas, compared to an average of 13% in countries that did not have such measures. Today, quota systems aim at ensuring that women constitute at least 30% or 40%, or even a true gender balance of 50%.<sup>31</sup>

Whereas, in terms of "Power and Decision-Making"; among the 23 countries with at least 30% women parliamentarians, nine are from Western Europe and seven from sub-Saharan Africa. The highest proportion worldwide was registered by Rwanda in its 2008 elections.<sup>32</sup> It is important to indicate that, Rwanda's total members of parliament according to the 2008 election are 80, and 45 of them are women equivalent to 56.3%. Rwanda uses legislated quotas for the single/Lower House; Legislated quotas for the Upper House; and Legislated quotas at the Sub-national level. Rwanda uses the List Proportional Representation (List PR),<sup>33</sup> election system, in which, each party or grouping, presents a list of candidates for a multi-member electoral district, the voters vote for a party. Parties then receive seats in proportion to their overall share of the vote. In some closed list systems, the winning candidates are taken from the list in order of their position on the lists. If the lists are 'open' or 'free' the voters can influence the order of the candidates by individual preferences.

The 2010 elections data, which is a survey of 116 countries, the top five countries in terms of highest quotas for women representatives, three of them came from the African continent, one

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<sup>28</sup> See Freeman, M.D.A. (2001) *Lloyds Introduction to Jurisprudence*, London: Sweet and Maxwell Ltd.

<sup>29</sup> (New York, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Statistics Division, 20 October 2010)

<sup>30</sup> The World's Women 2010 report (published every five years by the UN Statistics Division)

<sup>31</sup> Ibid, P. 116

<sup>32</sup> Ibid, p 113

<sup>33</sup> Countries which use the (List PR) are: Rwanda 56.3%; Sweden 45%; South Africa 42.3%; Nicaragua 40.2%; Iceland 39.7%; Norway 39.6%; Mozambique 39.2%; Denmark 39.1%; Netherlands 38.7%; Costa Rica 38.6%; East Timor 38.5%; Belgium 38%; Argentina 37.4%; Angola 34.1%; Kosovo 33.3%; Serbia 33.2%; Ecuador 32.3%; Slovenia 32.2%; Burundi 31.1%; Algeria 31.6%; and Guyana 31%.

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from Europe, and the other one from Latin America. The three African countries include Rwanda the top, Senegal with 64 women out of total of 150 parliamentarians; that is 42.7%. Then came South Africa with 169 women out of 400 total parliamentarians, that is 42.3%. The Latin American one is Nicaragua with 37 women out of 92, that is, 40.2%. The general favourable and encouraging comment that can be made about this 2010 election data is that, it is a clear indication that, more and more countries are adopting the quotas system to improve the participation of their women folks and politicians, within their party political structures.<sup>34</sup>

In 2009, only seven out of 150 elected Heads of State in the world were women, and only 11 of 192 Governments were headed by women.<sup>35</sup> On average, in 2008, 17% of cabinet members were women, which was a significant improvement from the 8% average in 1998.<sup>36</sup> In 73 out of 77 countries or areas, women comprise no more than a fifth of all mayors. They also comprise only a small percentage of councilors in local government.<sup>37</sup> Out of 190 national statistical offices worldwide, 41 are headed by women.<sup>38</sup> Of all the 500 largest corporations in the world, in 2009 only 13 had a female CEO - equivalent to less than 3%.<sup>39</sup>

The use of electoral quotas for women is gaining more momentum; in many regions, and continents, and this include the African continent as well. However, the African continent has witnessed the most dramatic increase in the use of electoral quotas, for the purposes of creating political and other spaces, for various disadvantaged groups in society, especially women. This is politically important, given the fact that, all goods and services, in society, are accessed and controlled via politics. Even socialisation of children in society, is influenced by various political decisions-making processes.<sup>40</sup> These political decision-making processes; are also intimately linked, to various polities and policies in society, and inherently influenced by political decisions-making processes. Factual data and other information sources confirm that, the numbers of women who partake in politics, as a result of the entrenchment of various quotas systems, in political institutions, and parliaments, are increasing at an increasing rate. In Britain, "party –based gender quotas for candidate selection have been deployed...to increase the number of women in Westminster and the devolved administrations of the Scottish Parliament and Welsh Assembly. They have been used most extensively by the Labour Party, and have had significant impact on the numbers of female representatives elected to these three bodies...".<sup>41</sup>

Universally, it is already ascertained that, the proportion of women parliamentarians has reached the target of 20.4% within the remit of the overall population of sitting members of various legislative institutions such as parliaments or national assemblies. Political parties

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<sup>34</sup> See the Quota Project: global Database of quotas for women, at <http://www.quotaproject.org/country.com>.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid, p. 117

<sup>36</sup> Ibid, pp.117-118

<sup>37</sup> Ibid, p. 119

<sup>38</sup> Ibid, p. 122

<sup>39</sup> Ibid, p.124

<sup>40</sup> See Mackay, F. et al (2003) 'Towards a New Politics? Women and the Constitutional Change in Scotland' in Alexandra Dobrowsky and Vivien Hart (eds) *Women Making constitutions: New Political Comparative Perspectives*. Basingstoke: Palgrave, 84-98

<sup>41</sup> See Squires, J. (2003) *Gender Quotas in Britain: A Fast Track to Equality?*, P3

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which have developed the definition of political equality between their male and female members to mean equality of outcome, are more proactive and rather enthusiastic in the embracement of party-based gender quotas, and are therefore, more willing to adopt a version of 'fast track' approach to achieve political equality.<sup>42</sup> On the other hand, within the context of the discourse on quotas for women representation, the inherent equality in this representation can also be accurately perceived as a determined process of gender mainstreaming.<sup>43</sup>

There are various strategic taxonomies of quotas in such a fashion that, the one may involve numeric or percentages determination of categories such as 20%; 30% or even 50%. The other may be strictly tied to the procedural aspect of selection, that is, short listing, or parliamentary candidates selection processes. The third one is either the implementation of quotas based on legislation, or let to optional party internal rules and regulations.<sup>44</sup> This is an eye opener, and a positive indicator that, the historical invisibility of women in the political arena will sooner than latter become a historical fact.

However; the concepts of agency and actors, within women political participatory parlance, must be properly interrogated and comprehended. Women agency, and their effective and efficient demonstration of this agency, within the structures of political parties, must be properly deciphered, within the remit of the quotas discourse. It ought to be appreciated that, women's agency is a function of their cognitive belief structures; which have historically been influenced consciously and subconsciously, by the comprehensive societal structures, during their socialisation. This is important to note so that, women in general do not become victims of illusion of control,<sup>45</sup> vis-à-vis the quotas system, and within specific, and general political parties' structures. It can be argued that, there are various types of political parties' leadership, which can in fact manipulate women's feeling by mere declaration of quotas systems, within party political structures, just to create a feeling of control in the women membership population. That is, some political tokenism. This is very common in the African contexts, and within African political parties' hierarchies.<sup>46</sup>

Universal women movements, for their comprehensive emancipation from overt and covert patriarchal subjugations, via various societal structures, have managed to locate women as a group, in relatively better positions now. Women are now able to eloquently say that, what is good for the gander is not necessarily good for the goose. That is, women have succeeded in developing their own narratives to counter the hitherto male centered universal perspectives, of human society, including all structures therein.<sup>47</sup> However, it must be acknowledged that, some leaders of governments and of political parties do in fact use the concept and practice of quotas as political pawns. The intended participation of women through the implementation of the

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<sup>42</sup> See Dahlerup, D. and Freidenvall, L. (2003) 'Quotas as a Fast Track to Equal Political Participation for Women'

<sup>43</sup> See Squires, J. (2003), P3. Op.cit.

<sup>44</sup> See Norris, P. (2000) 'Breaking the Barriers: Positive Discrimination Policies for Women.' P.3

<sup>45</sup> See Thompson, S. C. (199), "Illusion of Control: How We Overestimate Our Personal Influence", *Current Directions in Psychological Science* (Association for Psychological Science) 8 (6). Pp: 199-202

<sup>46</sup> See Tamal, S. (2003), 'Introducing Quotas in Africa: Discourse and Legal Reform in Uganda'. pp: 1-8

<sup>47</sup> Yanez. A.M. (2000) 'The Implementation of Quotas and Democracy in Peru'. P.2

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quotas system is considered a mere placation, and vacuous tokenism. For example, President Yoweri Museveni of Uganda openly stated that, "...quotas are nothing more than a symbolic gesture to please women...".<sup>48</sup>

However, notwithstanding the opinion of President Museveni of Uganda, it is humanely and intellectually refreshing; to indicate that, the majority of government leaders, and of political parties, do not think that, quotas are nothing more than a symbolic gesture to please women. These other leaders, strongly and genuinely believe that, quotas systems, within party political structures, are the pillars of societal reform, and restructurings, via political parties, in order to create a just world, in which, the more than 50% of the human population, can also positively and constructively, partake in the running of the world affairs. Out of the currently documented 116<sup>49</sup> countries, with constitutional, electoral or political party quotas, 30<sup>50</sup> of them allocate quotas for their women membership, on the basis of voluntary quotas, adopted by their political parties. This means that, party political quotas are becoming an unavoidable reality universally.

There is a need to clearly identify, possibly, through women's agency, how women see themselves in respective political parties. Is the perception of themselves consonant with the intrinsic assumptions inherent in the quotas doctrine or principle? For example, when reserved lists are made within the remit of the quotas principle, do women see themselves as individuals or as a group? The discovery of eloquent answers to these questions shall help in determining as to whether; women see themselves in various political parties as being accorded equal treatment, or some positive action commensurate with affirmative action and the commonplace notion of positive discrimination?<sup>51</sup> It appears that, various women movements, and women in general, perceive the discourse on quotas in political parties as going beyond the pedestrian meaning of equal opportunity and positive action or affirmative action.<sup>52</sup>

It is obvious that, the principle of quotas is premised on the basis that, women as a group, must be facilitated to participated in political parties as candidates, and become representatives. Therefore, women on the basis of the quotas approach as treated as a group, an entity as such. This approach is problematic, when critical examination of feminist discourse is brought into the equation. For example, Black female feminists have always argued that, treating women as a block is problematic. They argued that, concentration on the inequalities between men and women ignores the fundamental issues of inequalities as between women themselves. These are

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<sup>48</sup> See Museveni, Y. (1997) *Sowing the Mustard Seed: The Struggle for Freedom and Democracy in Uganda*. London: Macmillan. P.191.

<sup>49</sup> See Quota Project: Global Database of Quotas for Women; at <http://www.quotaproject.org/country.cfm>.

<sup>50</sup> These countries are: Sweden 45%; Nicaragua 40.2%; Iceland 39.7%; Norway 39.6%; Mozambique 39.2%; Netherlands 38.7%; Germany 32.8%; Switzerland 28.5%; Austria 27.9%; El Salvador 26.2%; Canada 24.7%; Australia 24.7%; Lithuania 24.1%; Croatia 23.8%; United Kingdom 22.5%; Czech Republic 22%; Israel 21.7%; Luxemburg 20%; Slovakia 18.6%; Thailand 15.8%; Zimbabwe 15%; Cameroon 13.9%; Romania 13.3%; Guatemala 13.3%; Cyprus 10.7%; Mali 10.2%; Cote d Ivoire 10.2%; Hungary 9.1%; and Botswana 7.9%.

<sup>51</sup> See Howard, M. and Tibballs, S. (2003) *Talking Equality: What men and Women Think About Equality in Britain Today*. London: the Future Foundation.

<sup>52</sup> Squires (2003), p.19. Op.cit.

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serious issues throughout the political communities of quotas, especially for those very discerning others in these communities.<sup>53</sup>

The analytical dilemma brought into the discourse of quotas, via the postmodernist tendencies, is very frustrating to the whole quotas agenda. The individualistic approach interferes with the essentially group discourse of the quotas doctrine. These are intellectual and political challenges which need to be tackled with some socio-cultural and political tactfulness, otherwise, the whole quotas agenda could easily be undermined. On the other hand, there is abundance of legitimacy in the fact that, the quotas agenda has been developed to remedy and mediate human hurt brought about by structural issues in human society. This being the case, it would be very unconscionable to sacrifice other categories of human beings so that, the quotas agenda can succeed and flourish. There is a danger of intellectual hostilities developing between those who ascribe to group based politics as opposed to those who support individualistic or liberal based politics.<sup>54</sup> On the other hand, "...it is also important to bear in mind that, women do not make up a homogenous group, and hence, it becomes problematic to generalise about all women and their interests. Indeed, the idea of 'women's interests' shared by all women regardless of race, class and sexuality has been highly contested...".<sup>55</sup> Other researchers into issues of quotas have also inquired as to, "... who do women in power represent? All women? To whom are they accountable? It is possible that they represent some groups of urban women, including some rural women, others from popular sectors, and others from professional middle sectors, but it would be hard for any one woman to represent all women...".<sup>56</sup>

However, notwithstanding all ubiquitous controversies over political quotas for women participation in polity, it can be argued that, the concept and practice of political quotas can be effectively and constructively interrogate within the remit of rights based normative and substantive discourse. The spaces that ought to be created for women in polity can be seen as being informed by principles and doctrines of justices, fairness, equality, and positive participation in various decision-making processes, in production and consumption of goods and services in society by women.<sup>57</sup> There are many good reasons why, those concerned with political quotas must feel optimistic in the face of the seemingly insurmountable obstacles in the march towards institutionalised paradigms for more effective quotas systems, for positive and constructive participation of women in politics and general issues of governance in society.

In the African continent for example, various drastic socio-political and economic occurrences have paradoxically resulted in women; and other disadvantaged groups becoming more alert and aware of the factors which hitherto, kept them out of the political participatory crucible. These groups and including women now want to assert and are actually asserting themselves. It

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<sup>53</sup> Spellman, E. (1988) *Inessential Woman*. New York: Beacon Press.; and Mohanty, C. (1991) 'Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourse' in Mohanty et al (ed) *Third World Women and Politics of Feminism*. Indiana: Indiana University Press.

<sup>54</sup> See Brown, W. (1995) *States of Injury*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, and Butler, J. (1990) *Gender Trouble*, New York and London: Routledge.

<sup>55</sup> See Waylen, G. (1996) 'Analysing Women in the Politics of the Third World.' In Afshar, H. (ed) *Women and Politics in the Third World*.

<sup>56</sup> See Yanez. A.M. (2000). P. 3 Op.cit.

<sup>57</sup> See Druker, H. (1979) *Doctrine and Ethos in Labour Party*. London: Allen and Unwin. PP45-67

can be strongly argued that, there is no way to reverse this momentum. There appears to be only one direction to go, and that is, forward, in terms of more perfection, of the various quotas systems, used universally.

### **Part Two: Case Studies**

#### ***2.0 The African Experiences***

Many countries in the Eastern, Central, and Southern regions of the African continent, have embraced the notion and practice of women quotas, in their various political parties, as vehicles for societal positive change, via political institutions.<sup>58</sup> Women groups, through their movements, and in collaborations with divers national, regional, and international civil society organisations, and other non-governmental organisations, have succeeded, in compelling their various political parties, to implement women quotas, even without legislative instruments, to compel these political parties to do so.<sup>59</sup> These positive developments have yielded many transformative results in these countries that allowed their women folks, to partake, in a genuine fashion, in the decisions-making processes within their respective societies. Women in these countries are feeling that, they indeed belong, and that, they can make a difference. Others would say that, it is too early to conclude that, women in Africa have already entrenched their rights to participate in the African political landscape.<sup>60</sup>

It is true that, women in Africa, like anywhere else in the world, have to fight hard to gain political and other spaces in society, within the given social, cultural and religious structures, which have been organised around the general, and specific, interests of men, in society, to the extent that, women are assumed to belong in these structures, and to be happy in them. That is, within the remit of the patriarchal ideology.<sup>61</sup> To appreciate the African experiences, in the quotas discourse, four case studies, from South Africa, Rwanda, Uganda and Senegal, have been selected, in order to create an opportunity for some comparative analyses, as between the Sudanese experiences, and these other countries' experiences, within the African continent. There is a wealth of knowledge that can be gained, from these exercises. These African countries, have gone through historical phases, which would be interesting to see, as to what kinds of benefits, can accrue to us, in our endeavour, to benefit from women quotas, in the African continent.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> See Meena, R. (2002) 'Women and Electoral Politics in Tanzania'. Paper presented at the *Conference on State and Politics in East Africa*. Organized by the REDET

<sup>59</sup> See Southern African Development Community Electoral Support Network (SADC-ESN) (2000) 'Gender Checklist for Free and Fair Elections Southern Africa'. Dar Salaam, Tanzania Gender Networking Programme. Also see MacFaden, P. (ed) (1999) *Reflections on Gender Issues*. SAPES.

<sup>60</sup> See generally Peterson, V. and Runyan, A. (1993) 'global Gender Issues'. *Dilemmas in World Politics*. Boulder: Westview Press.

<sup>61</sup> See Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU)(2000) 'Politics: Women's Insight'. Series Report and Document. No. 36. Geneva: IPU and IDEA (1998) *Women in Parliament: Beyond Numbers*. Stockholm: IDEA

<sup>62</sup> See Burn, S. and Shawn, M. (2000) *Women Across Cultures: A Global Perspective*. Mountain View: Mayfield Publishing Company.



### *2.1 The South African Experience<sup>63</sup>*

The African National Congress (ANC) is the only party in South Africa to have introduced a quota system, to ensure the representation of women in politics and decision-making. This system was introduced before the first general election for a democratic South Africa in 1994. The system is not legislated, but, is found in the ANC's guidelines for nominations of public representatives. When the ANC<sup>64</sup> was formed in 1912, women were not allowed under the constitution to be full members of the organization. Despite being regarded as such, under the leadership of: Charlotte Maxeke, women actively participated in the ANC and in 1913 formed their own organization, the Bantu Women's League (BWL). The BWL articulated the concerns of women and contributed immensely in uniting African women against pass laws, rising food prices and apartheid in all of its manifestations. As a result of the activities of the BWL, the ANC decided to permit full membership of both women and men in 1944. In 1948 the ANC Women's League was formally launched. From its founding, the League had a vision to unite South African women across the colour barrier. In 1954, the Federation of South African Women (FSAW) was established and the League became its leading component.

It was against this background of active participation that the ANC committed itself to a vision of a non-sexist, democratic, non-racial and prosperous South Africa. Gender equality and the emancipation of women found expression in ANC policy pronouncements. This commitment was evident during the period of negotiations to end of apartheid, the writing of the interim constitution and the development of the Reconstruction and Development Policies (RDP). It laid the foundation for issues of gender discrimination and their resolution to be mainstreamed into our present constitution, government policies, laws and programmes.

During the constitutional negotiations, which brought about a political settlement to the conflict in South Africa, women from across the political spectrum came together to form the Women's National Coalition (WNC). The WNC was an initiative of the ANC Women's League, and brought over 100 women's organizations and groups throughout the country together to draw up a charter covering women's rights. The WNC strengthened the position of the ANC Women's League on gender issues. It opened up the debate on the emancipation of women and gender equality in the country. It was during this period that the ANC Women's League deepened its understanding of the structural and complex nature of gender oppression, and the need to introduce extra special measures, such as affirmative action and the quota system, to address the underrepresentation of women in decision-making and politics, the economy, and all other areas from which women have historically been excluded.

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<sup>63</sup> This case study has been adopted from a paper by Mavivi Myakayaka Manzini, in Manzini, M.M. (2003), "Political Party Quotas in South Africa". A Paper Presented at the IDEA Conference in Pretoria, South Africa, 11-12 November 2003.

<sup>64</sup> The ANC is currently the ruling party in South Africa. From 1912, it led the struggle against apartheid and the struggle for the establishment of a democratic South Africa. It still regards itself as a liberation movement rather than as a classical political party.



### 2.1.1 *The Introduction of the Quota within the ANC*

In the period when the Charter for Women's Rights was being written, ANC Women's League structures engaged in several discussions regarding, *inter alia*, mechanisms to implement affirmative action policies to ensure the representation of women. It drew on the experiences of the international women's movement in particular; the experiences and achievements of women from the Scandinavian and Nordic countries also had an impact on these discussions. The setbacks suffered by women from Angola, Mozambique, Namibia and Zimbabwe - in regard to their participation in political decision-making - also informed the discussions. At its conference in Kimberly in April 1991, the ANC Women's League decided to push for constitutional recognition of 30% female representation in ANC decision-making structures

In the democratic elections of 1994, one-third of the public representatives elected by the ANC to the national and provincial legislatures were women. As a result, 25% of the members of the National Assembly were women. This was a great leap forward, as prior to 1994; South Africa had never had more than 4% representation of women in parliament. This placed South Africa among the top ten countries in the world in regard to the participation of women in parliament. The ANC government went ahead and appointed women as ministers and deputy ministers. In parliament, women became presiding officers, advisers, whips and committee chairpersons.

The 1999 elections witnessed the increasing presence of women in political decision-making. Unlike in 1994, when the ANC had to use the quota system to place women on its lists for the national and provincial legislatures, in 1999, the list for the national parliament did not have to be altered to achieve one-third representation. Women were placed in every third position on the national list. Thus, the ANC list process resulted in the achievement of 33% representation of women. Women in South African politics became more visible.

From 1999 to the present, there has been significant progress in terms of the representation of women in the cabinet. Out of 27 ministers, nine are women, and of the 14 deputy ministers, eight are women. In cabinet, women are not only awarded the usual women-related portfolios, but they are also involved in almost all areas of foreign affairs, finance, housing, trade and industry, public works, public enterprise, health, minerals and energy, agriculture and land, home affairs, public service, communications, local government, justice and constitutional affairs, arts, culture, science and technology, tourism, the environment, defence and intelligence. In the national parliament, of the four presiding officers, three are women. Women are also playing a greater role in the civil service, as directors-general, deputy directors-general and chief directors.

These achievements would not have been possible without a viable women's organization within the ANC itself, which over the years has fought for the realization of these goals. Since 1994, one can boldly say that the Women's League has played an increasing

role. In addition to consolidating the role of women in decision-making, it has had to make sure that the outcome went beyond numbers, and to use the critical gains that it has achieved in legislatures to change the lives of women throughout the country. It has helped to ensure that parliament and government adopt laws, policies and programmes that address the needs of women, such as creating a health care system that is readily accessible to women and children, establishing a social development system that targets people at risk, especially single mothers, developing water and forestry community projects that benefit rural communities environmentally and financially (through reforestation and sustainable development), implementing programmes that increase women's access to small and big business and financial opportunities, and introducing several laws that deal with issues including gender equality, the choice to terminate pregnancy, marriage, divorce, maintenance, domestic violence, inheritance, housing, water and sanitation, electricity provision, and the protection of domestic and farm workers. The beneficiaries of government programmes have been the poorest of the poor, the majority of whom are women.

### ***2.2 The Rwandan Experience<sup>65</sup>***

As of 31 August 2002, women accounted for 52.3% of the total population, according to the General Population and Housing Census (54.6% just after the April 1994 genocide). This population should not continue to be marginalized. It is a potential resource of society, and should be recognized and valued as such. The Transition Government in office between July 1994 and May 2003 had the political will to facilitate the progressive establishment of institutional mechanisms to promote gender equality and to bolster the capacities of women. This process has unfolded with a view to implementing gender quotas.

Pressure was made by the movement of civil society organizations, especially women's organizations and the women's networks, as well as the Forum of Rwandan Women Legislators, who are from different political parties, along with the eminent role of the Minister of Gender and Women's Promotion. These strategies developed into a crosscutting approach that involved fostering awareness, conducting training, carrying out research to evaluate the indicators of equality and equity, and strengthening the advocacy and lobbying skills of women. The aim was gender mainstreaming.

The Rwandan Constitution fully incorporates gender equality in its 203 provisions. Accordingly, this fundamental instrument provides a strategic opportunity to implement quotas in the three branches of government, and to allow citizens to enjoy their rights and to fulfil their duties. Article 9,(4) maintains that: 'The Rwandan State undertakes to conform to building a State under the rule of law and a pluralist democratic regime, the equality of all Rwandans, and equality between women and men reflected by ensuring that women hold at least 30% of the positions in decision-making bodies'.

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<sup>65</sup> This Rwandan case study was adopted almost verbatim, from Hon. Judith Kanakuze in Kanakuze, J. (2003) 'Quotas in Practice: The Challenge of Implementation and Enforcement in Rwanda', a Paper Presented at the IDEA conference, Pretoria, South Africa, 11-12 November 2003.

### ***2.2.1 Women's Representation before Quotas***

Five women ministers and secretaries of state out of a total of 26 - that is, about 19%. Four women secretaries-general out of a total of 16, that is 25%. Four women mayors of districts and towns, out of a total of 106 that is approximately 3%. Two of SLX presidents of the departments of the Supreme Court are women. More than 35% of the members of the Gacaca courts are women. The Court of Appeals has four presidents and four vice-presidents, all of whom are men; three of 157 appellate judges are women that is 2% The National Assembly was composed of 75% men and 25% women. At the local level, 76% of the members of the Provincial Executive Committees are male. Men account for 75% of Rwanda's diplomatic personnel abroad.

### ***2.2.2 Women Representation after Quotas***

The quotas were first implemented in the 2003 parliamentary elections. Rwanda emerged in first place regarding women in national legislatures worldwide, according to the classification by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU). With 48.8% of the members of the Parliament women, Rwanda is now the country closest to male/ female parity in politics; before these elections, 25.7% of the members of the Rwandan legislature were women. Twenty-four seats 30% were reserved for women in 12 provinces, including the city of Kigali. This guaranteed the participation of women at the grassroots or local level. In addition, elections were held in the provincial district, where women accounted for more than two-thirds of voters.

The Constitution of Rwanda is clear about quotas: the same formula is only to be applied in regard to members of the government. In terms of the other central or decentralized institutions, the choice is clear - an office has been established within the gender observatory that will monitor respect for quotas at every level (Article 185).

### ***2.2.3 Debates on Quotas in Rwanda***

Rwandans are convinced that the country's sons and daughters should be responsible for its sustainable development. And it is a matter of social justice to support equal access for men and women in regard to participation-resources, control, and decision-making. The factors that give rise to debate are inherent to the patriarchal system and culture. Transformations will occur gradually, as gender is integrated at every level (including in projects, programmes, budgets, conduct and culture).

### *2.2.4 The lessons to be drawn from the Rwandan case*

Rwanda's positive experience is based on the following factors:

1. Good governance, which gives rise to the political, will to achieve gender equity and equality;
2. The state's partnership with civil society;
3. Training executive and managerial personnel so that they are capable of listening to the population, and persons trained in advocacy based on the results of studies and research;
4. Strengthening the capacity of women through specific mechanisms;
5. Female solidarity and partnerships with men in regard to gender issues;
6. Institutionalizing budgets that integrate gender;
7. Reviewing laws that enshrine inequalities or any form of discrimination against women;
8. Those countries preparing new constitutions, or revising them, should respect the clauses of CEDAW during the constitutional process. Moreover, they should accord priority to the participatory and inclusionary approach, by creating a specific space for women;
9. Sensitizing the population to the equality of men and women (girls and boys should be provided with the same education, for example);
10. Strengthening the capacity of women involved in decision-making and continuing to project a positive image of women;
11. Continuing the education of leaders and planners in relation to gender issues (concepts, tools for gender analysis, gender audit, etc.). The gender approach should be a planning tool;
12. Drawing up a national gender policy; and
13. Creating a permanent network for sharing experiences of the new style of leadership built on a partnership between women and men.

### 2.3 The Ugandan Experience<sup>66</sup>

Uganda became independent on 9 October 1962. Its unicameral system of parliament was inherited from the former colonial power, Britain, as was the majoritarian electoral system.<sup>67</sup> It has a population of approximately 24 million, 50% of which are women. Uganda has been ruled by various modes of governance.<sup>67</sup> Men dominate the 'public' space of formal politics, while women are relegated to the domesticated 'private' space.<sup>68</sup> In Uganda, under the current National Resistance Movement (NRM), the principle of 'individual merit' is preferred to 'party affiliation' when one runs for any elective political office. Adherence to the ideal of individual merit was generally maintained in the initial years of this arrangement, but it was soon overtaken by the political agendas of subsequent years.<sup>69</sup> Today, the government openly backs 'movements' and campaigns against 'multi-party' system in any election.<sup>70</sup> Affirmative action was introduced to Uganda through quotas. Reserved seats for women made their debut on the Ugandan political scene in 1986. In what appeared to be a testing of the waters, the NRM first experimented with one mandatory seat for women on the executive councils of local councils (LCs) at all levels of the five-tier system."<sup>71</sup>

Electoral quotas in Uganda have the strong backing of the law.<sup>72</sup> The ultimate objective of affirmative action or positive discrimination, as understood by Ugandan feminists, is not only that women attain the quantitative critical mass needed to influence decision-making, but also to move substantively away from relations established by centuries of oppression and inequality to a future of truly equitable relations.<sup>73</sup> The quota system offered greater visibility for women and lent them a voice in traditionally patriarchal institutions. In particular, it has resulted in a shifting of political sites and a relocation of power (albeit slight), spurring a new kind of political self-organization for Ugandan women. Closer analysis of the quota system in Uganda reveals several blotches below the gleaming surface. When the NRM introduced quotas for women in the National Assembly, for example, it only intended to create 'descriptive representatives' who symbolically 'stood for' women. The patriarchal state was not prepared to have female MPs that politically 'acted for' women in the sense of

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<sup>66</sup> This Ugandan case study was adopted from a paper by Sylvia Tamale, in Tamale, S. (2003) "Introducing Quotas in Africa: Discourse and Legal Reform in Uganda". A Paper presented in IDEA conference in Pretoria, South Africa, 11-12 November 2003.

<sup>67</sup> Okumu-Wengi, J. (1997) *Weeding the Millet Field: Women's Law and Grassroots Justice in Uganda*. Kampala: Uganda Law Watch.

<sup>68</sup> See Ddungu, E. (1989) *Popular Forms and the Question of Democracy: The Case of Resistance Councils in Uganda*. Working Paper No. 4 Kampala: Centre for Basic Research.

<sup>69</sup> See Goetz, A. M. (2003) "The Problem with Patronage: Constraints on Women's Political Effectiveness in Uganda". In Goetz, A. M. and Hassim, S. (eds) (2003) *No Shortcuts to Power: African Women in Politics and Policy Making*. London: Zed Books.

<sup>70</sup> See Museveni, K.Y. (1997). Op.Cid.

<sup>71</sup> However, most executive councils throughout the nation, inadvertently or deliberately reduced the role of these women in their midst to the traditional functions of nurturing and caring. They were expected to serve tea to other councillors, take care of the social aspects of council work and have little to do with local politics." The Ugandan women's movement was dissatisfied with the token representation in both local and national decision-making institutions. The 1985 United Nations (UN) women's conference, held in neighbouring Nairobi, Kenya, especially inspired Ugandan women to demand their rights. They voiced dissatisfaction about the situation of women to government at every opportunity.' Partly because of this pressure, but also as a result of political expediency and calculation, the NRM, in 1989, opened the door further to women's participation in politics, expanding parliament to include 39 reserved seats for women (one from each district).

<sup>72</sup> The Constitution clearly lays out the objective of introducing affirmative action in Article 32(1): Notwithstanding anything in this Constitution, the State shall take affirmative action in favour of groups marginalised on the basis of gender, age, disability or any other reason created by history, tradition. Article 180 (2)(b) provides that: 'one third of the membership of each local government council shall be reserved for women'.

<sup>73</sup> See Schreiner, J. (1996) 'Affirmative Action and Reconstruction: A Basis for Changing Race, Class and Gender Inequality'. In Blade, N. and Mpumelelo, S. (eds) (1996) *Affirmative Action and Transformation*. Durban: Indicator Press.

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transforming the unequal gender relations prevailing in Uganda. By emphasizing the descriptive nature of female representatives, the constitution creates 'status-quo' representatives.

When the quota policy was first implemented in Uganda, men immediately became the self-appointed identifiers of 'appropriate' women to fill the newly created seats. This was partly because the space into which women were being pushed was compositionally and institutionally a male one.<sup>74</sup> Quotas cannot deliver a democratic, non-sexist political economy without the effective dismantlement of the hierarchical institutions that exist in the patriarchal status quo. Placing women in positions of leadership and authority without simultaneously attempting to remove the practical and structural obstacles that hinder their effective involvement in this arena is not very helpful. Simply adding women to existing social and political structures and stirring can do little to eradicate the discrimination and inequities from which they perennially suffer.

Indeed, quotas may prove much more of a burden than a blessing to women.<sup>75</sup> While it is wonderful to have women participating in formal politics from the grassroots to the highest level of decision-making, we should not lose sight of the fact that it is yet another duty that they must perform in the domestic economic arena. The law establishing quotas must be carefully worded. Interpretation of certain words or phrases may lead to detrimental results for the intended beneficiaries of this law. For instance, when a law is couched in terms of 'at least one of the offices ... shall be held by a female' (as Local Governments Act provides in regard to the sub-county and district executive committees), in practice, they are usually interpreted to mean 'the maximum number'. This inadvertently creates a glass ceiling, making it impossible for women's representation to rise above the stated quota.<sup>76</sup>

To this end, quotas in the Ugandan parliament have proved to be class-centric, largely benefiting a minority of an educated elite group of Ugandan women.<sup>77</sup> By eliminating almost 80% of the female population, the policy perpetuates the characteristic of mainstream post-colonial politics that has excluded the voices of the largest section of the peasant population. An immediate measure would be to have women who occupy quota seats elected not by

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<sup>74</sup> I am not denouncing quotas per se. Rather, my criticism is directed at the top-down initiatives - whereby government 'invites' marginalized groups to participate - because they form an insecure foundation for generating radical change. Had the quota system been implemented as a result of intense pressure exerted by the Ugandan women's movement (i.e., bottom-up grassroots movement), perhaps the rules governing participation would have been devised by women themselves and the beneficiaries of the policy would hardly regard it as a favour. Neither would the NRM hold women psychologically at ransom, engendering the kind of complacency and self-satisfaction that is sometimes exhibited by some female parliamentarians and councillors.

<sup>75</sup> Tamale, S. (2001) 'Gender and Affirmative Action in Post-1995 Uganda: A New Dispensation or Business as Usual?' In Oloka-Onyango, J. (ed) (2001) *Constitutionalism in Africa*. Kampala: Fountain Publishers.

<sup>76</sup> The current single-member majoritarian electoral system operating in Uganda promotes division between female politicians. Many women emerge from elections deeply scarred by the largely acrimonious first-past-the-post (FPTP) campaign." Furthermore, one reason why women avoid the open county under the FPTP system is because they cannot match the 'big money' that most male candidates invest in their campaigns. Campaigns run under the proportional representation (PR) system have proved to be relatively cheaper, less murky and more issue-based. Indeed, it is no coincidence that all but one (Cuba) of the 14 countries in the world with female representation that exceeds 30 percent has the PR-based electoral system. It is especially effective when boosted by gender quotas.

<sup>77</sup> Tripp, A. (2000) *Women Politics in Uganda*. Kampala: Fountain Press



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electoral colleges but by universal adult suffrage or, better still, by an all-female electorate. Not only will this measure remove the hurdles that arise through dealing with a relatively small, manipulative male-dominated electoral college, but it will also allow Ugandan women, as electors, to have a say in choosing the best possible female representative, who might defend their concerns and interests. Furthermore, a limit (such as two five-year terms) should be set for women standing on the affirmative action ticket, allowing many more women to be exposed to national decision-making. In order to avoid a situation where beneficiaries feel beholden to the state or perceive quotas as a favour (and not a right), women need to maintain a critical distance from the state and establish autonomous bodies that challenge the inequalities that exist within the patriarchal state.

### ***2.4 The Senegalese Experience***<sup>78</sup>

The situation in Senegal is quite complex, as in many countries. While women account for more than 50 percent of the population and for more than 50 percent of the electorate, and while they play fundamental roles in the country's economic development, they are hardly to be found in decision-making positions in general, particularly in the National Assembly.<sup>79</sup> Even though the Constitution of Senegal, adopted in 2001, is relatively progressive when it comes to women's rights, there is no institutional mechanism to promote them politically. As for women's representation in the National Assembly, Senegal is among the leading countries in Francophone Africa, with a rate of 19.2 percent since 2001. This has increased steadily over the past 20 years, climbing from 12 percent in 1993 to 16 percent in 1998.

**Table 1: Women in the National Assembly of Senegal from 1957-2001**

Legislature	Number of Seats	Number of seats held by Women
Legislature 1957-63	80	0
Legislature 1963-68	80	1
Legislature 1968-73	80	2
Legislature 1973-78	80	4
Legislature 1978-83	80	8
Legislature 1983-88	100	13
Legislature 1988-93	120	18
Legislature 1993-98	120	14

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<sup>78</sup> This Senegalese case study has been adopted almost verbatim because of its similarities with the Sudanese experience, from a paper by Kasse, A.F. (2003), 'Women in Politics in Senegal', A paper presented at the IDEA conference in Pretoria, South Africa, 11-12 November 2003.

<sup>79</sup> Also see Shvedova, N. (1998) *Women in Parliament: Beyond Numbers*. Stockholm: International IDEA. Pp. 19-34



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Legislature 1998-2001	140	21
Legislature 2001-06	120	23

This trend can be explained by a set of factors among which one can note the growing consciousness of women themselves, encouraged 'by a national and international situation favourable to women's representation in terms of quality and numbers. In the absence of a legislative mechanism, they have mainly concentrated on working with political parties and political actors generally, through initiatives to raise awareness, advocacy campaigns, and the holding of training workshops. Coordinated action to promote the political role of women, through their organizations, really began in the context of international preparations for the Beijing conference. Until then, initiatives were isolated and quite weak.

### ***2.4.1 Strategies to Promote Women in Politics***

In 1994, at a workshop organized by the African Institute for Democracy on the topic of 'Women in Democracy', a group of women involved with political parties, trade unions, and women's organizations decided to create a unified structure to promote women's leadership, especially in politics, which it called the Senegalese Council of Women (Conseil Senegalais des Femmes (COSEF)). Its status as an entity that cut across party lines, the commitment and cohesion of women at the grassroots, and its national presence in all ten regions of Senegal, made COSEF a major innovation in Senegalese politics. As there were no legislative measures to assure the promotion of women to elected office, COSEF decided to develop strategies to work with different actors with the potential to further women's representation. These included the political parties, women's political movements, women's organizations, civil society in general, and the media.

In 1997, efforts were made to consolidate COSEF structures at the grassroots level and to initiate training programmes for women and to raise awareness of gender issues among those who were elected. The 1998 legislative elections were preceded by a major campaign under the banner of 'Democracy where are you?' The campaign combined actions geared towards the parties, the media, and the general public, including press conferences, posters, the publication of inserts in the national press, and the production and dissemination of a cassette. Accordingly, under pressure from women and especially women's organizations, some parties have instituted quota systems (which ranges from 25 percent to 40 percent), which have experienced difficulties. For other parties, having directives sent to the grassroots structures in the lead-up to the elections was enough to ensure that the quota was implemented by parties. Senegal has a mixed electoral system, with proportional voting for national lists and majority voting for departmental lists.

### 2.4.2 *The Role of Political Parties*

One of the conclusions drawn from the evaluation of the 'Democracy where are you?' campaign is that 'whether there is substantial representation of women on the lists depends on their presence in the directing bodies of their parties'. Yet number of women in directing bodies of political parties is low. Moreover, the evaluation confirmed that resistance to the quota system is also to be found in the party apparatuses and their grassroots structures, as well as among certain women who find it demeaning.

Most of the women deputies in the National Assembly have been elected via proportional representation from the national lists. This confirms the results of the analysis by Richard Matland, who states that proportional voting is more favourable to women. One example is the national list of the *Parti Démocratique Sénégalais (PDS)* - today the majority party in the National Assembly - in the last elections. Clearly, the party leadership decided to include a certain number of women candidates on the national list in winnable positions, to compensate for the very limited number of women on the departmental lists contested by majority vote. Even though it is apparent when analyzing the situation in Senegal those women in politics is not seen as integral to expanding democracy, it appears that this may be changing. Now, we must draw out the lessons from our own experience and the experiences of others and determine the best solutions for our democracy, while clearly understanding that there is no single or miraculous solution, and that quotas alone will not solve the problem.

### 2.4.3 *Lesson learnt*

As for the quota, beyond the debate regarding its adoption, women should also direct their actions more effectively, gearing their efforts towards the real vehicles of change. In 2000, Senegal witnessed its first change of government from one political party to another. All actors and political observers agreed that women played an important part in the transition. This change resulted in a constitution - its notable gains in terms of acknowledging certain rights of women were noted above. Nonetheless, the challenge remains to implement its provisions, which might be helped through providing education, training, and the continuous consciousness-raising of key actors, among them, first and foremost, the political parties. And the choice made by women's organizations is to appeal to them and to convince them really to adopt, in fact and in practice, affirmative action measures with respect to women. That is what we are working towards every day.

### 3.0 The Asian Experience

#### 3.1 *The Pakistani Experience*

Quotas are not new to Pakistan. Popularly known as "reservations", the 1956, 1962, 1970, 1973 and 1985 constitutions all provided for reserved seats for women at both the provincial and national assemblies, but of small magnitude, mostly 5% to 10% and through indirect elections by the members of the assemblies themselves. Reservations lapsed in 1988 after three general elections as provided for in the 1985 constitution. In the last general elections of 1997, women's representation hovered between 4% in the provincial assemblies (2 out of 460) to 2% in the Senate (2 out of 87) and 4% in the National Assembly (7 out of 217). At the local government level, where 5% to 12% of the seats were reserved for women through indirect elections by the councils themselves, women constituted only 10% of the membership in 1993 (8,246 out of 75,556).

##### 3.1.1 *Difficulties and Challenges*

The unprecedented number of women elected in the recent elections following the adoption of a 33% quota by government opened up not only an enormous political space but a strategic opportunity for women to make a difference in setting and implementing the agenda of local governments. With the devolution process, this level of government is expected to have the most impact on people's lives and offers the greatest hope for social change. But the basic question is how women can use their critical mass to affect public policy particularly those related to poverty reduction, the biggest challenge in Pakistan.

To determine their readiness and competence in playing the role of movers and shakers in the local councils, it is important to examine where the women are coming from: their age, education, socio-economic status, and political background. While there is very limited information on this subject, existing studies show that most are less than 45 years old (57%); more than half are illiterate (53%); the majority are housewives (73.7%); very few own land; and an overwhelming majority have never contested elections (79 per cent); neither have their families (64%).'

What are the implications of the socio-economic, political and demographic profile of the women councilors? First, it shows that the quota system has opened doors for socially disadvantaged and marginalized groups that otherwise stand no chance in winning positions of formal political authority traditionally obtained through the politics of money, family influence and party patronage.

Second, the relative youth of the women councilors indicates that young women have placed enormous faith in the ability of the political system to address existing social ills and institute reforms. Being young, they are expected to be more open to innovation and creative change.

Third, that, housewives contested and won electoral seats reflect their willingness to go

beyond their reproductive roles as bearers and nurturers of life and assume the task of community leadership as active social change agents. But this also has serious implications on gender-based assignment of household roles and responsibilities as well as the way local councils will schedule the conduct of their business. Men have to share in household work to provide women the time to perform their legislative duties and council schedules have to be adjusted to allow women to combine their multiple roles.

Fourth, that the majority of women councilors are illiterate mirrors the general female deprivation of education opportunities and should be a major factor to consider in designing not only the curriculum but in the choice of mentoring approaches as well. Hands-on, participatory popular education methods certainly are most appropriate under these circumstances.

Fifth, their newness to politics is both an asset and a liability. On the one hand, their freshness brings the insights, vision and perspective that political veterans may have lost through time. On the other hand, their being neophytes mean that training must start from ground zero. Their capacity to learn, however, can never be underestimated and the skill with which they can use their lived realities in setting their agenda and using their life experiences in developing pragmatic, workable solutions to concrete socio-economic problems might far exceed ordinary expectations.

### ***3.1.2 National and Provincial Level Quotas***

While the government was supportive of reserving one-third of the seats in local councils for women, the same did not hold true for its policy towards women's representation at the Senate and the national and provincial assemblies. After much speculation and debate about what percentage' government will come up with, the National Reconstruction Bureau (NRB) announced that 17 of the 100 seats in the Senate or 17% will be reserved for women and in the National Assembly, 60 of the 342 seats (18%) distributed to the four provinces.

### ***3.1.3 Quotas and the Electoral System***

The issues raised on women's political participation have focused not only on the 33% quota for women but on the electoral system as well. According to the present policy on reservations, the 60 seats for women will be filled through proportional representation that is, based on the number of popular votes received by political parties in the elections. While proportional representation is considered the most woman-friendly of all electoral systems and used by all 10 countries in the world with the highest number of women's seats in parliament, there was vigorous opposition to this method by women activists in Pakistan.

They contended that women will be beholden to political parties whose structures, processes and agenda are generally patriarchal. Those who are directly elected will most likely treat women in reserved seats in the provincial and national assemblies as second class members. With their own constituencies as mass base, they will be able to respond more effectively to

their needs. The women demand direct election by a joint electorate of women and men in enlarged constituencies created through the fusion of two normal-sized constituencies. All eligible voters will have two votes: one for the reserved seat in the enlarged constituency and another for the general seat in their normal constituency.

### 4.0 *The Sudanese Quotas Experience*

#### *Introduction*

The Sudanese experience is to be put in context of national, regional and local debates and processes within the Sudan. It is a narrative and standpoint of multiple of actors;<sup>80</sup> who constructively, used various socio-cultural and political factors and processes; that subsequently yielded the women quotas. These actors advocated and defended the need for women quotas. They worked on the legalistic technical aspects of the quota regime, and stayed on it until the enactment of the 2008 Electoral Law<sup>81</sup>. The general consensus reached in the many debates, discussions, interviews, and expert opinions vis-à-vis these various actors was that, there is a Sudanese precedence in terms of the demand for quotas regime, via an affirmative action; to enable women participation in Sudanese political life. Not only that, but also, for the Sudanese women to partake in general civil, executive, diplomatic and other public life decision-making processes in the country.<sup>82</sup>

The genesis of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) acted as a political catalyst for Sudanese<sup>83</sup> women and others, in terms of the quotas issues. Other initiatives also resulted in the Maastricht Declaration<sup>84</sup> of 2000; which is in fact the climax of work that started in 1998, in Khartoum; and which was spearheaded by a few NGOs, with the generous support of Netherland Embassy in Khartoum. These efforts further reresulted in the Oslo Donors Conference (ODC) of May 2005; after the signature of the CPA.<sup>85</sup> The Sudanese women wrote

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<sup>80</sup> These actors included Women Movements, politicians from various political; national and international NGOs, various general and specialized UN organizations, academics, youth groups and many others.

<sup>81</sup> The quota in Sudanese electoral law states at least 25% of seats in parliament are *reserved* for women through a proportionate representation system. A list of women candidates only to be prepared exclusively by political parties; that is a party list at each state. The national level parliament is also state level based. Sudan at 2008 - 2011 was divided into 25 states of a Federal system. The lists for national parliament are to be at state level according to population size of each state. The total seats *reserved* for women are 110 out of 450 seats in total. 15% of parliament seats are *reserved* for candidates of both gender through the proportionate representation system but these became mainly men's list. Two parties out of 15 parties that ran the elections included women in the common candidates 15% list. Further, a total of 70 women candidates ran for geographic constituencies, 7 won at state level parliaments (source: The National election Commission Website, see also *Badri 2010 paper I( The Impact of the Quota on Increasing Women's Participation"*,

<sup>82</sup> The Fourth International Conference held in Beijing in 1994 is considered as the starting point for this active demand for quotas by Sudanese women. The demand of civil society, academia and government delegations who attended the conference was replicated by the women in exile, especially those of political parties in what is named as the Asmara Principles for regaining democracy signed by political parties in exile.

<sup>83</sup> Sudanese Women Initiative for Peace currently renamed as Sudanese Women Empowerment for Peace (SUWEP).

<sup>84</sup> In the declaration, the demand was for at least 30% quota for women representation at all levels. This demand became the cornerstone for subsequent demands, and it appeared in all women's activists' literature as well as becoming the text for various conferences recommendation, vis-à-vis women's delegations etc.

<sup>85</sup> See Badri, B. (2008) Sudanese Women Profile: Pathways to Empowerment.

a solid a pre-conference document; *titled, (the Women Minimum Agenda)*, within the remit of the ODC, in which, they outlined and analysed, Sudanese women's needs and achievements and their demand for at least 30% quota representation in all branches of government.

### **4.1 The Quotas Debate**

The Sudanese quotas debate is premised on, and characterised by, a number of paradigms, and these include the human rights paradigm, the religious paradigm, the emancipatory paradigm, biographical paradigm, and the commonplace political paradigm. All these paradigms have singularly or severally influenced the historical and contemporaneous quotas discourses and they shall definitely influence future debate of the quotas regime.

### **4.2 The Human Rights Paradigm**

The struggle for women quotas by Sudanese women has witnessed the use of doctrinaire, and philosophical narratives which are imbued in language of justice, legal rights, fairness, equality, freedoms, and equities. Women from all classes and religions in the Sudan, whether professionals, homemakers, students, farmers, politicians, civil servants, businesswomen and youth, all look at the concept and practice of quotas as a matter of human rights, where they see that their women rights are essentially human rights. These women, collectively, believe that, quotas are the only way to guarantee their participation and increase their representation in society, in order to overcome the socio-cultural context; where women are considered as being incapable in all fields including politics. They argue that, some men view politics as a dirty game, and as such, women ought not to get involved in it. It is only men's game, and women ought not to forsake their main reproductive roles.<sup>86</sup>

### **4.3 The Religious Paradigm**

These various women groups argued that, religion ought not to be used as a tool for the suppression of women. They maintained that, quotas system shall emancipate them via the rule of law from religious tyranny. Hence, without a clear quota, such a patriarchal ideology camouflaged in religion cannot be overcome. With quotas regime enforced, men shall be obliged to vote for women candidates, and accept them as equals in parliament; in relatively larger numbers. This, it is argued shall lead to future gender mainstreaming and equality. In the early days of Islamic rule, even during the time of Prophet Mohamed, women were not prohibited from taking part in public life.

### **4.4 The Emancipatory Paradigm**

This is straightforward gender sensitive, and gender mainstreaming approach to the discourse on quotas. Others shall call it feminist approach; it does not really matter much. The bottom line is that, women's agencies are to be set free, and their freedoms of choices within the rule of

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<sup>86</sup> Generally see Peterson, D. (2009) Inside Sudan: Political Islam, conflict and Catastrophe.



law are to be respected.<sup>87</sup> It could be argued that, the public good approach in the quotas discourse fall within the ambit of this gender sensitive and gender mainstreaming paradigm. For example, with the quotas regime in operation, and with more women in parliament, it could be argued that, Sudanese women parliamentarians will push more for social welfare policies, change in laws to be more women friendly especially in family and criminal and land rights laws and demanding for engendering the national budget and gender mainstreaming government policies.<sup>88</sup> It is also argued that, women parliamentarians shall push for achieving the minimum agenda they have agreed upon before. The increase of women participation in parliament will have advantages for the Sudanese people and political parties.

### ***4.5 The Biographical Paradigm***

The biographical paradigm refers to Sudanese political history, especially the Sudan under President Nimeri (1969-1986). This was the time of military dictatorship, in which, the Sudan was ruled by a single political party dictatorship (the Sudanese Socialist Union). Women were allocated a quota of 10% in the National Assembly. There was also 10% quota for women at local levels and at counties levels. The ultimate question to ask is, what benefit did women as a group achieved under these arrangements? Did those women go to parliament as representatives of all women or just party political women? How best could contemporaneous Sudanese women politicians learn from these biographical experiences?

### ***4.6 The Commonplace Political Paradigm***

The commonplace political paradigm is basically about everyday political practice in which, alliances are established, and divers consultations are made, for the sole purpose of securing the end political results, within the remit of given multiple political interests, as regards various political communities in the Sudan. Various women groups, belonging to different political parties came together to pursue the common goal of securing functional quota system. It was argued that, women representing different political parties in parliament, will lead to more alliance both in parliament, as a women caucus as well as continue linkages with civil society.

A workshop sponsored by Fredrich Ebert Foundation in collaboration with South Sudan Women Solidarity Group coordinated political networking, together with other Sudanese women, who also carried on lobbying and negotiating within their political parties for more concrete consolidation of quality quota system. More consultations were made during awareness raising workshops and meetings. This process started in 2007, and led to fruition December 2008 Electoral Law, and the work continued till April 2010. The majority of Sudanese political parties were comfortable with 25% quota; however; some other political parties strove for percentages ranging between 7%, 10%, 35, 40, and 50%

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<sup>87</sup> See generally Towards Achieving the MDGs in Sudan: Centrality of Women's Leadership and Gender Equality, UNIFEM, Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, (2005).

<sup>88</sup> See generally, Abdel Aal, M. (2008) 'women and Political Work' in Sudanese Women: Present and Future, Badri, B. (ed) RIG/DPR



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respectively. The final percentage was agreed upon by the major political parties in the Sudan, and that, this percentage was reasonable and akin to that of South Sudan.<sup>89</sup>

Once the major political parties settled for 25% quota, the Sudanese Women Movement gave in for the same percentage, even though, their initial demand was for 30% quota. On the matter of election system, Sudanese opposition women, plus various civil society organizations, and those in academia, all of them wanted the implementation of the Proportionate Representation System (PRS), and that, this provision must be included as a clause in the electoral Law. Had this been accepted by the ruling party, 40% of the parliamentary seats would have reserved for the PPR and the remaining 60% to be contested for through-out the geographical constituencies.

The Sudanese opposition women had campaigned for a joint list, of both women and men. Such lists were to be developed by the opposition political parties as well as the party of government, or alternatively, by independent candidates. The order of the lists should be in such a fashion that, the alternating women and men names shall produce percentages of 25% for women and 15% for men respectively; to equal the 40% required for the PRS. With women being given a priority. Had that been accepted, a measure of gender mainstreaming would have been implemented in the quota system. However, that was not to be, thanks to the insistence of the ruling party that, women ought to appear on their own separate list.

As mentioned above, the government party (NCP) imposed the application of a separate 25% of women only list as the political party list. The 15% list shall only include women at the discretion of respective political parties, and according to their own intra-party arrangements. The NCP argued and justified its decisions that, such a system shall guarantee full representation of women, and it is also a marginalisation proof system. With that, the NCP, which had 52% of the seats in parliament, then passed the 2008 Electoral Law. It must be reiterated that, the government used the word list instead of quota, in order to undermine the inherent doctrinarian and quasi-legalistic power of the word quota.

The word quota implies affirmative action, and some substantive right of those who are to benefit from such an affirmative action. The government uses the word list, to imply a subjective procedural event, which does not carry some legal obligation. The government is conscious of the power of language in the quota discourse. So therefore, the phrase women quota is extremely more powerful and structurally threatening than the word women list, which is a pedestrian phrase with no structural threats to the establishment and the patriarchal ideology of dominance. Therefore, the force of language to change discourse from women quota to women list is overwhelming. The feminist used quota to have justification for the need for affirmative action; that is, to empower women, to make them real, tangible and effective. To empower them and make them effective in various engagements in core mainstream party political work, and not just doing menial political party work.

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<sup>89</sup> Interviews with Election Commission Members and Political Parties Representatives to the Constitutional Commission.

These women have to influence the various structures in their political parties, while at the same time, enhancing their capacities and capabilities and building their personal and professional confidences. That is the power of the word women quotas, as opposed to women list; as encouraged by the government. The government uses the word women list to entrench an isolationist and marginalisation quotas discourse in the Sudan. This kind of an approach; to the notion and practice of quota, emphasis the decorative presence of women in society; and governmental institutions. The women are there, but, they are there separately, isolated, and structurally forlorn, as subaltern others.

The word women list entails that, the women are there, in various political parties, and parliament as politically dispossessed and disabled invitees. They are in fact nothing but political spectators, who cannot influence the course of comprehensive political events, in their various political parties and parliament respectively. The word women list entails the pleasing of women, by allowing them to share the parliamentary dome, with the men, but as separate others. The NCP wants the Sudanese women to carry the inabilities, disabilities, and incapacities, inflicted upon them, by socio-cultural structures, into their political parties and the parliament respectively, whereby, in their various political parties, and in parliament, they are seated separately from men, in their own rows, according to their own list, that is how they came into parliament. Patriarchal ideology, religion, culture, anthropology, and sociology have followed women into political parties and parliament, thanks to Sudanese notion and practice of quota via the disparaging and degrading word women list.

### ***4.7 Sudanese Women Diverging Opinions<sup>90</sup> on Representation and the Quotas Discourse***

Although representation of women in political processes is important for the overall advancement of women in society, the use of quotas merely facilitates *a formal access* for women to the political system.<sup>91</sup> In the Sudan, the quotas discourse fails to take women's diverging agendas into consideration. When interviewing members of parliament and actors within the opposition and civil society in Sudan it becomes clear that women's issues are very politicized and sensitive.<sup>92</sup> According to Nahid Muharnrnad Hassan, a female human rights activist, *"women stand against women themselves. Women's issues are politics. It is a very politicized issue"*: Nonetheless, the quota is regarded as vital by female political activists in Sudan. "the hope is that the method to obtain a large number of women in Parliament inspires [arising of consciousness concerning the issues of women, contributing to the solution of many of the problems that women suffer from ( .. ) and denying them opportunities, resources, development, capacity building, and self-realization".<sup>93</sup>

In the words of Sara Nugudallah of the Umma Party, "the quota is not a goal in itself; it is a

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<sup>90</sup> "We are not as different as women we are different as political parties" Mariam al-Mahdi from the oppositional Umma Party (Sudan Tribune, July 9, 2008).

<sup>91</sup> Celis, K. et al. (2008): "Rethinking Women's Substantive Representation". *Representation* 44 (1) 99-110. Sudan Tribune: "US welcomes adoption of Sudan elections law", *Sudan Tribune* July 9, 2008:

<sup>92</sup> See Tennsssen, L. and Kjostvedt, H. G.: "The Politics of Women's Representation in Sudan: Debating Women's Rights in Islam from the Elites to the Grassroots" CM I Report R 2010: 2

<sup>93</sup>see Badri, B. (undated): *The Women's Electoral Quota in the Forthcoming Election Law in Sudan. RIG/DPR.*

process which will eventually lead to a legal reform of current discriminatory laws against women - that is, if women agree on what is considered discriminatory".<sup>94</sup> According to female human rights *activist* Nahid Jabar Allah; today's battles for Sudanese women *have* to be fought within the realm of social and civil rights: "the battles we have today are also a consequence of the shortcomings of civil society. We have mainly focused on political rights we need to focus on civil rights and social rights. In those areas we are not so empowered. It is clear when it comes to law reform. We are not ready. The laws need critical reading."<sup>95</sup>

Mere parliamentary presence of women, has not led to substantive representation, i.e. to legal reform of discriminatory laws. The present Muslim Family Law (1991) stipulates that women need a male guardian to contract their marriage, allows marriage at puberty, polygamy, and restricts women's rights to file for divorce. Liberal Muslim *activists* fight to abolish the need for guardian, for a woman's right to refuse co-wives, and for equal rights to divorce. They argue, as Asma Muhammad Taha of the Republican Brothers does, that, "pushing for equality in the public sphere does not matter unless you do reform the most important areas of the family law, for equality between women and men."<sup>96</sup> We want to reform the Islamic law. (..); to give the woman her right to divorce in the marriage contract (..) It should also be stipulated that, man cannot marry a second Wife". All of this is argued from an Islamic point of view.

On the other hand, women of a fundamentalist persuasion want to reinforce the inequalities between men and women in the Muslim Family Law and they even argue to further restrict women's right to divorce. Surayha Muhammad Ahmad Khelr of the fundamentalist Ansar al-Sunna says: "the family is the most important thing. It is important to maintain the family as an institution and women as mothers, We believe in Islam; to repair. We do not believe in divorce. This stems from the Quran. Islam does not like divorce. We try to convince women not to seek divorce".<sup>97</sup> It thus clear that, Sudanese Muslim women's perception of gender equality is not unitary. They all frame their arguments within Islam, offering different interpretations of the Islamic law (Sharia). Whereas liberal Muslim activists advocate for gender equality in all areas of law, the fundamentalist women do not deem gender equality neither necessary nor desirable.<sup>98</sup>

Bouta and Frerks<sup>99</sup> suggest that Sudanese women, are not only divided between Muslim and non-Muslim activists, but also Muslim women activists are politicized, and that, views advocated among women in parliament and civil society at large are far from coherent. They further argued that, there is no such thing as *a* women's agenda or *a* women's movement in

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<sup>94</sup> See Tonnessen, L. and Kjøstvedt, H.G., (2010). Op.Cid

<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid

<sup>97</sup> Ibid

<sup>97</sup> Ibid

<sup>98</sup> Ibid

<sup>99</sup> Bouta, T. and G. Frerks (2002): *Women's Role in Conflict Prevention, Conflict Resolution, and Post-Conflict Reconstruction*. Netherlands Institute of International Relations.

Sudan. Muslim women activist hold that, gender equality is possible and desirable; however, there are also women activists, who do not see the need for gender equality. The debate is intense and fierce as competing interpretations of Islam is at stake. Increased representation or "strength in numbers" does not automatically translate into legal reform of discriminatory laws concerning women. Simply to 'include' some elite women's voices in a politics that is flawed will have little transformative effect for Sudanese women generally. Legal reform as a tool to better the situation of women is important, but it is not enough.<sup>100</sup> The impression is that; the political and social interests of the elite driven women's organizations take precedence over contributing to empower grassroots women. There are important authoritarian constraints which forms the backdrop of Sudanese women's activism both among the elites and the grassroots; a weak parliament, lack of judicial independence and media censorship.

### *4.8 Positive Consequences of the Quotas System in the Sudanese Experience*

The quota system produced some structural and procedural positive consequences in the Sudanese experience. At the structural level, it made society to come to terms with the fact that, women's involvement in public sphere is extremely crucial, if the Sudanese society is to benefit from the more than 50% of its citizens. It also made others to realize that, Sudanese women have other qualities besides the roles ascribed to them by biology as it were. In fact, the quota system, notwithstanding its transient nature, it is the litmus test for the reformation of the Sudanese society within the remit of its comprehensive structural architecture. At the procedural level, the quota system drastically altered the fashion in which, hitherto, various political communities in the Sudan interacted among and between themselves.

The quota system consolidated and reinvigorated various relationships between Sudanese political women; in various political parties, Sudanese activists women in various civil society organisations; and Sudanese women in academia. The networks between these categories of women have been professionalised, while at the same time; smoothening the rough edges of these networks into seamless and cordial human and professional interactions, characterised by common reciprocities, for the realisation of common interests, within, the Sudanese society, and through these political communities. These various categories of Sudanese women understood that, the task of political advocacy and capacity building is a joint and collegial responsibility, and therefore, they ought to pull together, in the general socio-political and cultural direction as it were.

At the political parties' level, the quota system changed the ethos of their partnership relationships. Some of these political parties, for the first time, produced joint quota list as purposive coalition of political parties. In some instances; political parties, faith based organisations, civil society organisations, traditional leaders and even families, worked together, to produce a joint quota women list. This is structurally refreshing to say the least. These were opportunities which allowed many women to directly get involved in politics and

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<sup>100</sup> Ibid. p8

political work. The quota system also availed opportunities for proper documentation of women candidates in the Sudan. It also encouraged many youth groups, and individuals, as well as the media to participate in direct political mobilisation and conscientisation respectively.

The NCP as the ruling political party exploited the quota system to the maximum. It hesitantly accepted the notion and practice of the quota system for several reasons. In the first instant, it wants to portray itself, as the caring political party, vis-à-vis women participation in public life in general, and in politics in particular. It knew the power of the female vote, in general, and other elections, and thus, it went for the political kill as it were. On the other hand, it could be argued that, the NCP wants to demonstrate that, Islam is as democratic as any other Western based political ideology. It wants to show that, Sudanese women do not need the West to participate in politics in the Sudan, and thus, the quota system came in handy for the NCP for this purpose.

For the political purposes of dominating the political scene and the government, the NCP saw the recruitment of many women into its side via the quota system as a practical strategy. Therefore, the NCP instrumentalised the quota system, and manipulated it to gain more control in parliament, and it did. The NCP has the money and various practical infrastructures necessary for winning any elections in the Sudan. It controlled the State media and other media outlets. It has an efficient logistics infrastructure to the extent that, many women openly stated that, the NCP was the only party that came to their neighbourhoods, and provided them with transport to various polling stations, and thus; they voted for the NCP. This is typical of African political parties; and their relationship; with the notion, and practice of the quota system.

### ***4.9 Negative Consequences of the Quotas system in the Sudanese Experience***

The political bobble of the quota system burst, when the majority of political parties boycotted the 2010 general elections, leaving the NCP to have political and elections field-day, and it monopolised parliament, and reduced the inertia and enthusiasm of the quota system debate into political farce. The commotions, debates and discussions, that preceded the general elections, in terms of political mobilisations, via the quota system, for the 2010 general elections, was almost reduced into political and intellectual babbles, and nothing more. It is debatable as to whether, the boycotting political parties misunderstood the philosophical premises of the quota system, or, they did understand, but, for their own political reasons, decided not to partake in the 2010 general elections. It did not stop the NCP and other political parties from proceeding with the general elections. The Sudanese peoples were the losers. Feelings of comprehensive disappointments, disenchantment, disenfranchisement, and profound disillusion came cascading down on various political communities, their operatives, activists and leaders. Many political communities representing women, youth, and others were politically disoriented.

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This dangerous and unfortunate political development resulted in total and further differentiation of the hitherto re-integrated Sudanese political communities. A culture of political survival of the fittest crept into the Sudanese political landscape, and various dialogues in various political fora came to standstill. The most negative impact was that, the NCP and the SPLM were left alone in parliament and in government, to muddy and soil Sudanese politics to the extent that, it led to the dangerous and unfortunate secession of South Sudan. The Sudanese peoples were absent in parliament and in government. The two parties; the NCP, and the SPLM, managed to polarise the Sudanese political communities, and the Sudanese women did not have the chance to mediate in this dangerous episode. There was no political solidarity, in the name of the Sudan, as a territory, and peoples. The quota system was not given a chance, to play a role, in the Sudanese political quagmire.

As would be expected, the women who went to parliament, as a result of the 2010 general elections, were NCP and SPLM token politicians. In fact, they went in as numbers, rather than as women, representing women's comprehensive agendas. Again, the quota system was a travesty. The NCP and SPLM women, in parliament, had nothing in common, for they were also consumed, by the political mistrust, and hate, that were also consuming their male party political colleagues. Therefore, these NCP and SPLM women, in parliament, were nothing, but, they were merely the extension of the political stalemate, that was gripping, and suffocating the Sudan. It was not therefore surprising that, none of the women minimum agenda issues were raised by these women parliamentarians. Issues of utmost importance to women, children, the aged and every Sudanese were not raised by these women in parliament.

For example, women only issues such as engendering the budget, women illiteracy, and innumeracy, girls' education, issues related to the reduction of run-away astronomical numbers in maternal mortality rates, enactment of laws to prohibit, and criminalise all forms of female genital mutilation (FGM), all these women specific issues, were completely ignored, by the NCP and SPLM women in parliament. Even issues related to women's participation, in bigger numbers, in various national, regional, and international; executive, legislative, diplomatic, and judicial decision-making positions, and bodies, were never tabled, by these NCP and SPLM women in parliament.

These NCP and SPLM women, were there in parliament, to toe the party line, and thus, to become docile to their parties' and government's status quo. Whether they were not permitted to; or, they elected, of their own volition, not to rock the political boat, is immaterial. The fact is that, they did not rock the political boat. In fact, these NCP and SPLM women, in parliament, did not want to bite the political fingers that feed them the political milk and honey. That is the tragedy of the quota system, in the Sudanese experience. The type of quota system, restricted for electing party women only, led to the election of inexperienced and novice political women, into parliament, and that explains, the political rummaging for what to do, and how to do it, in parliament, and elsewhere, by these NCP and SPLM women.



The majority of these NCP and SPLM women lacked knowledge, skills, and experiences. Some even have no clue of what political culture and etiquette mean. Most of them did not receive any relevant vocational and professional training in, women's issues, national, regional and international relations, as well as general communication skills. Many of them have no clue what budgets are, let alone the notion and practice of engendering these budgets. Some of those women who came to parliament via the party list came from the State were not neglected in terms of comprehensive training and other services to prepare women for parliamentary and general political work. This may hold true also for men parliamentarians.

### ***4.10 The Way Forward in the Sudanese Quota Experience***

There is a general consensus, in the Sudanese political communities, at least, at the civil society level that, the hurt and disappointments, that followed the 2012 general elections, ought to be reinvested, and the political energies in them, converted into political drivers that shall move the Sudanese political communities forward, towards a positive political future. Now that the country has been broken up, and South Sudan has seceded, the task ahead now, is to forge new political solidarity in the name of a permanent and engendered national constitution. The Sudanese political communities already have the quota system templates and texts. These shall constitute the political milestones and roadmaps, for future work, within the remit of the said constitutional work, and a constitution in which, clear references must be made to the pre-eminence of the quota system, as a remedial legal, and morel instrument, that shall facilitate the beneficial, and legitimate implementation, of the various constitutional articles, in humane and just fashions. These should be the entry points, for the way forward in our Sudanese quota experience.

More work is needed, to entrench a type of a quota system, with clear mixed and balanced quota list of both sexes. The entrenchment ought to be made very explicit, in an act of parliament, either amending the 2008 Electoral Law, or passing a new act purposely for quota system, for the coming election in 2014. Even the order of alternating women and men names ought to be entrenched in an act of parliament, to guarantee that, political parties adhere to the intention of parliament. There is also a need for a separate political party law, as an affirmative action vis-à-vis the participation of women, in the effective running of political parties. This may be problematic, but, if there is a political will, in government, and in various political parties, then, there is nothing illegal about such an act of parliament. Society ought to look at the intention of such an act, and not consider the feelings, of patriarchs, in various political parties.

If it is right, just, fair, and legal for women, to have quotas for entering parliament, and in which some of them, shall enter via the very political parties, then, if women shall work in various parliamentary committees, there is no reason why, they should not start working from their party political levels, within their parties' structures. The 30% quota ought to be entrenched, and the issues of women coming from the States, and other categories of women, ought to be taken into consideration, when considering the modification of the electoral law, or



the passage of a new one. These various categories of women need to be put into the general framework, of the women quota. Even among women themselves, there are issues, which might not work, to the advantage of many women, whose interests may not be so easily represented, by the mainstream women, within the gender mainstreaming parlance. Therefore, the representation of diverse categories of women is crucial. That may lead to thinking of a quota for different categories. The electoral by-laws and party registration by-laws may include this, so that, the representation of women from different parts of Sudan is guaranteed. This is to safeguard against the phenomenon of class, ethnicity, race, elitist, and professional biases.

### ***Lessons Learnt***

The above analyses of the quota discourse, including the insights into the African, Asian, and Sudanese experiences, within the remit of the Quota discourse, have definitely availed the opportunity to learn some lessons. These lessons shall always be relevant to party political work, and the role of women members of various political parties, and how they in fact contribute in these political parties, while at the same time, developing their political and personal capacities, for the sole purposes of constructive and positive service to society, via the said political parties. The various lessons that could be learnt include, lessons on the following:-

### ***Women Position in Political Parties***

While political parties are institutions expressly invented for political work and relationships, for the sole purposes of general governance of society, within the framework of the legislative, executive, and judicial institutions, and other related institutions; political parties are also, part and parcel of the human society, in which they are found. Being part and parcel of the human society in which they are found; therefore, political parties are macrocosms of human societies in which they are found. They contain, and are built, and sustained, and thus revolved around comprehensive social, cultural, religious, and moral values systems, which govern the wider society.

Therefore, the roles of women in these political parties shall be determined by the level of societal socio-cultural development. This is evidently clear when we compare the position of women in various continents around the globe, and look into the roles of women in these different human societies. On the other hand, patriarchs shall always be patriarchs. However, there is some degree of patriarchal relativism. This degree of patriarchal relativism will then determine whether women are allotted the Quota just to please them, as President Museveni of Uganda alluded to, or, the women Quota is actually to make substantial difference as is the case in the Scandinavian countries. This is determined by the level of societal socio-cultural development.

It is then clear that, for women to constructively and positively contribute to general and comprehensive societal development, political parties' leaders, gatekeepers, operatives, managers, and general grassroots membership, must disabuse themselves of all negative socio-cultural stereotyping vis-à-vis the role of women in society. They have to accept women as

normal and equal human beings notwithstanding their biological difference. Women biological difference must not be seen as comprehensive handicap within the remit of party political work, and meaningful involvement, and participation. It is important that; women are given the chance, to get involved in managing political parties, in which they are members at all levels. They are not in these political parties to serve tea, and do menial party political work deemed as women work. That is, the extension of women roles in the households, to formal political parties. This must stop if women are to become party political gatekeepers, leaders, managers and major decision-makers. Therefore, for women to benefit meaningfully, and for society in general to benefit meaningfully from the Quota System, women must have a say, they must have meaningful, constructive, and reformative roles, and beneficial participation at all levels of political parties' structures.

### ***Quota's Role in Socio-Cultural Transformation through Political Parties***

The cardinal reason why the Quota System has been introduced in many political communities around the globe is not for mere presence of women in political parties only. Since political parties are the socio-legal and political conduits, and drivers, which allow political communities, to manage and distribute comprehensive societal resources, and at the same time, make major decisions, which can change many people's lives, they are then, important in terms of socio-cultural transformation. The ANC in South Africa is creating an incremental, but definite, socio-cultural transformation, in South African society.

However transient the Quota System may be, it is a political instrument for making a political space for women, for the sole purpose of allowing these women to voice their concerns about issues which most concern them in particular and society in general. While narrow definition of women issues appears as if these issues are in fact only concern women, wider definition and analyses of women issues indicate that, these issues in fact concern society in general. This is due to the position of women in society and their role in societal reproduction and sustenance.

General issues of societal socialisation and positive moral education revolve around women. It is therefore no coincidence that, issues of child welfare are always twined with women issues. That is why, in economies where there are financial income supports for families, such monies, including child support, are always paid to women not men. Therefore, if Quota Systems are properly organised and implemented, it is possible that, there shall always be a positive change which contributes to positive socio-cultural transformation in society. The South African case study is indicative of the fact that, the more women get involved at all levels of government and societal management and organisation, the more there shall accrue benefits which reach many more people.

This means that, political parties must facilitate this process of socio-cultural transformations by allowing more women to become involved in the management of political parties at all levels of their structures. It also means that, political parties' constitutions and bylaws must expressly indicate the benefits of Quota Systems and their relevance to issues of societal socio-cultural transformation. Political parties can become socio-cultural agents of change by changing popular perceptions about women and the various roles that they can play in society.

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### ***The Feminist, Conservative, and Liberal Schism in Political Parties and the Essence of the Quota System***

Women are as heterogeneous as the heterogeneity found in societies in which they live and work. The Quota Systems are inherently premised on the basis of group work and benefits. There are conservative women leaders, operatives, and activists in various political parties, who see the Quota Systems as tokenism and demeaning to women. A kind of political handout, and political pitying, for the purposes of confirming women's socio-cultural and political inferiority vis-à-vis men. These women do not see anything good and tangible coming out of the Quota System other than the perpetuation of patriarchal ideology and subordination of women. Others oppose the Quotas System from theological perspective, as being an attempt to undo what God has done, in terms of difference between women and men.

Feminist and liberal women believe in the individual liberty of women as persons in society. They look at the concept of one-to-one correspondence in terms of rights, freedoms and other positive opportunities found in society, within the framework of equity and equality respectively. They believe that, these recognitions and protections of rights and freedoms are essential for the guaranteeing of equity and equality in society, instead of rummaging for political spaces via the Quota System. These are important lessons to take into serious consideration if we are to mobilise women as a group, for the purposes of harnessing their collective energies, and agencies for positive societal advancement.

The other factors of women heterogeneities, which various leadership of political parties ought to reckon with; are discoverable within the realm of racial, class, ethnic, tribal, religious, and linguistics differentials. These factors make the integrative presumptions in the Quota System problematic. It is therefore socio-culturally and politically prudent to device ingenious Quota Systems; which shall always carter for these factual human differentials, which are at times, causes of societal conflicts. Ignoring these differentials, and proceeding to device Quota Systems, as if women are homogenous group, is actually the production of recipes, for societal instability, albeit via women's lack of positive cumulative capacities, to participate in society.

### ***Election Systems and the Implementation of the Quota Systems via Political Parties***

It is obvious that, there are many types of election systems, which are used by various countries. However, the most favourable election system, and which is Quota Systems and women friendly, in terms of guaranteeing the achievement of the goals of the Quota Systems is the Proportional Representation System (PRS). In particular, the political parties PRS is the most conducive for the attainment of maximum participation of women in the political processes, and at various levels within various governmental institutions as is the case in South Africa.

Therefore, various political parties need to embrace the PRS for the maximum participation of women via the party quota list. On the other hand, the communities of political parties in the Sudan for example, need to reach a consensus that, for their female membership to attain the 30% maximum participation, the election system that must be entrench either via the

constitution or a legislative instrument is the PRS. This shall indeed show that, Sudanese political parties for example, are genuinely in favour of Sudanese women positive participation in the running of the country's comprehensive affairs; for the benefits of all the peoples in the country, and not only the so-called women issues. In fact, it ought to be understood that, women's issues are societal issues. The lesson learnt is that, the political ball is in the court of the political parties; therefore, they ought to make sure that, PRS is entrenched as the sole legal election system for the implementation of beneficial and constructive Quota System for general societal benefit.

### *The Constitutionality of the Quota System and Political Parties*

Political parties have political, moral, social, cultural, and legal obligations, to make sure that, Quota Systems are enshrined in national constitutions, in order to guarantee the entrenchment of the Quota System. These Quota Systems, ought to be constitutionally entrenched as socio-cultural and legal instruments, to be embedded in the governance culture, and to acquire legal standing of their own. The acquisition of their own legal standing means that, their violation shall be justiciable, and at the same time, their violation shall attract various legal sanctions, and thus, guaranteeing positive monitoring tools at the same time.

There are countries like Rwanda which have constitutionally entrenched the Quota System throughout the governmental institutions. Not only that, such constitutional entrenchment shall also necessitate the passage of legislative instrument to compel political parties to operationalise such constitutional articles pertaining to the Quota System within their party political structures. Therefore, in the Sudanese case, again, the various political parties must begin working towards such constitutional entrenchment. It is in fact to the advantage of such political parties, taking into serious consideration, the roles of women in these political parties.

### *Linguistic Semantics within the remit of Political Parties and the Quota System*

Notwithstanding the plethora of linguistic semantics, in the Quota Systems discourse, within, and without, the political parties, we should concentrate on the intrinsic intentions, within the ambit of the principle of Quota Systems. Words like descriptive, substantive, gatekeepers, tokenisms, and such like, are all methods of using language to problematise the Quota System debate. Issues of affirmative action, or positive discrimination, gender sensitive perspectives or gender mainstreaming; are all methodologies, in which, language as a species of societal structural variables, is used to convey certain values that, society ought to take into serious considerations, as being of essences.

Therefore, what are these intrinsic intentions of the Quota Systems? The intrinsic intentions that, political parties ought to internalise are mainly transformative in nature. The Quota Systems aspire to comprehensively, and positively, saturate societal institutions, with corrective dynamism, as regards the roles of women and men in society. These roles ought to be seen within positive reciprocal relations, between men and women in society. It is joint venture

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reciprocity for equity and equality of spaces and actions in society. It is the celebration of positive agencies of both men and women, and especially of party political women, so that, the reservoir of their hitherto unused political energies; are politically unleashed, for societal benefits. It means the absence of the culture of zero-sum participatory political ethos. It means the entrenchment of consensual and cooperative societal enterprise. These are the duties and obligations of political parties in society. Political parties must internalise the facts that, the political futures of men and women are symbiotically, and intricately intertwined; to the extent that, men and women, shall rise and fall together. The Quota Systems aspire to make men and women, to positively rise together, and thus, lifting society out of its comprehensive underdevelopment quagmire.

### **Conclusion**

Political women, and their multiple roles, in various political parties, must be understood, analysed, and appreciated within the remit of general societal socio-cultural development. Political parties, in which these women's roles are to be investigated, are, but, species of general societal institutions, albeit that, they are expressly designated as political parties. The adjective '*political parties*', must not blind us to thinking that, in fact, these organisations, exist in different and separate universe, away from the contradicting, and at times, suffocating values system of human societies; from which, women in particular have endured times of invisibilities.

There are layers of political and other interests, within various political parties, and these interests are represented by the various human resources in these political parties. These human resources include, the leaders, the gatekeepers, or, (*those who in fact take the day-to-day managerial decisions within the political parties' administrative and political structures*), the operatives, activists and grassroots. Therefore, women's position in these political parties is to be located within the context of these interests and human resources. It is the political and other temperaments of these human resources, informed by their group and cumulative interests, who shall always, determined the intensity and magnitude of women participation in intra-political parties' structures and decision-making processes.

The case studies, representing the African and Asian experiences; from South Africa, Senegal, Rwanda, Uganda, and Pakistan, all have structural and procedural similarities; vis-a-vis the position of women, and the roles they play; as regards their dominant political parties. All these political parties are characterised by the difficulty, in which, the women members, have to mobilise and create alliances, among divergent women groups. These alliances are made in order to harness political and socio-cultural pressures, in order to overcome internal political parties' divergent resistances. The said resistances are to the notion and practice of women involvement, in constructive and effective ways, in the management of party political

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structures. Women want to get involved as political parties' managers because, that shall facilitate their selection, and contesting general and other elections, within party political structures and for parliament, for that is the main aim why people join political parties.

For women's full and equal participation in decision-making processes at all political parties' structures, a strategic framework is needed which explores ways of overcoming the cultural and structural barriers to gender balance in political parties work and representation. There is a need to remove all cultural barriers for full exercise of women's citizenship. Some awareness-raising, capacity-building and research and documentation work is needed. On the other hand, rigorous advocacy for policy reform in political parties, electoral systems and campaign finance, are also ways of overcoming structural obstacles.

In the awareness-raising process, issues that need highlighting include the importance of women's representation and participation in decision-making; the transformational politics that women bring; and women's political participation as a human right. In the realm of capacity building; training on women's citizenship rights as voters, candidates and elected officials. It will also include young women's leadership training; how to run and win; and skills-building for women within party political structures. Also training on skills for developing policy agendas; as well as, articulation and negotiation; influencing, and shaping policy decisions, and allocation of resources.

Women's effective political participation, in various political parties' structures, is not only about increasing their numbers, but, about effectiveness and impacts. Women should be able to participate in open, transparent, accountable decision-making processes within their respective political parties' structures. The presence of women in various political parties should not be as mere beneficiaries, and objects of political convenience; but, rather, as agents, and subjects of political, and developmental change. Political women's effectiveness, ought to be demonstrated in a ubiquitous fashion, by the extent to which, they are able to influence political parties' institutional rules, norms and practices; and concomitantly, shaping policy agendas, and decisions, about the use, and allocations of resources, within their respective political parties. Comprehensive women impacts, in their respective political parties; ought to be seen, and demonstrated. This demonstration ought to be, via various entitlements, capabilities and rights, which, women in political parties are able to secure for themselves, and other women; outside these political parties. Political parties' women should also be able to redress general gender disparities, in order to positively change general women's lives, especially the lives of various poor women in society, in a drive towards the attainment of societal parity as between men and women.



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